

# FARES PLEASE!

February 2016

\$2.00 incl. GST

*News from the Ballarat Tramway Museum*

## A Special Experience



*Photo: Peter Bruce 24/1/2016*

Only the clothing and the multitude of street furniture date this as a 21<sup>st</sup> century scene. No 1 first travelled along here in 1887! With the news that the horse drawn tramway in Douglas on the Isle of Man may not run again, there would be few places in the world where a trip such as this can be undertaken in a street setting.

The operation of Tram No 1 on the Sunday nearest to Australia Day is now a permanent fixture. This year Mat Thompson brought along *Brooke* and *Hank* to haul the tram. *Brooke* is only young and new to the task, but she soon got into the swing of it and a great day was had by all. About 500 journeys were made on the horse and electric trams on the day. Thank you again Mat.

**Inside: Maintaining Rail Based Heritage**

*Ballarat Trams are Ballarat History*

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**Above:** Making controller 'bits'



**Above:** These diamonds indicate where power is to be 'off' to reduce arcing on the overhead wires



**Above:** Barry and Dennis putting up the frame for the new Horse Tram No. 1 display.



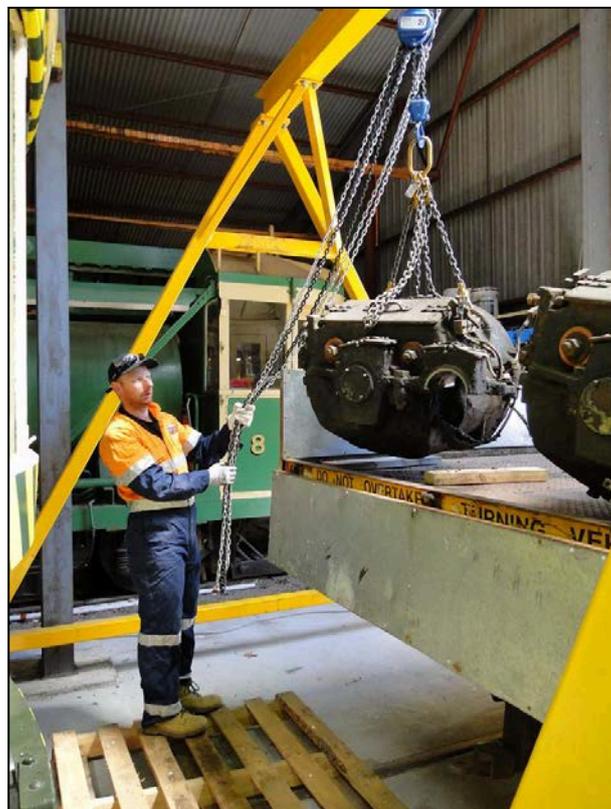
**Above:** Our new warning signs

### Work continues over the summer ...

*All photos by Roger Gosney & Peter Waugh*



**Above:** Hugh McKelvey is our latest volunteer to commence training to become a motorman



**Above:** Paul Mong unloads No 18's motors using our new crane

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### Around the Museum

#### Operations

The commitment of a very small band of workers over the holiday period enabled the Museum to trial extended operating hours over summer. On most days we were able to commence running over an hour earlier and the benefit was reflected in the highest patronage for January for several years. In past years operations have been limited to the afternoons on weekdays as on most days only one person was available to open up and run the tram. In recent years we have managed to develop a core of local, retired, volunteers which has enabled us to roster two or more people each day. It has also meant that the Museum itself is very likely to be open when the tram is operating.

Visitation is heavily determined by weather and on the very hot days it was shown that the earlier start allowed people to ride before the temperature became unbearable. This kept the figures up to acceptable levels on all but one day and this one was due to a wet morning. For next year it would be great if we could attract one or two of our less regular volunteers to take some of the load off the locals.

Geoff Gardner again volunteered to run the tram on Christmas day and seventy nine people travelled. Not everyone is tucking into a turkey dinner during the afternoon these days and the Museum is providing visitors to Ballarat with something to do.

We welcome Liam Davies to our ranks of conductors. Hugh McKelvey, a semi-retired local, is well advanced in his training to become a driver and John Whiting, a Bendigo and Melbourne tram driver, is undertaking a familiarisation course. They are all welcome additions to our traffic staff.

The Begonia Festival will again be held over the March long weekend. Summer rains and less stringent water restrictions should lead to a spectacular display in the gardens. Council has contracted the Museum to provide a free tram service and it expected to be another very busy weekend. The Roster Clerk is already seeking offers of assistance.

With less than two weeks between Labour Day and Good Friday it is planned to run every day from Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> March until the end of the Victorian school holidays on Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> April.

#### Tram No 939

We had hoped that this project would be finished before Christmas, but accreditation of the vehicle to run has proved to be a much more major exercise than it would have been in the past. Essentially, the Regulator now needs evidence that a maintenance regime will specify standards and procedures for every facet of the maintenance of the tramcar. For example, one question asked was “*How do you determine tolerance's such as brake piston travel and brake block wear etc?*” The compilation of documentation to satisfy such questions has been a massive task and without Warren Doubleday's expertise the Museum would be struggling to finalise the process. Starting over a year ago, Warren has now spent hundreds of hours on the project.

#### Bungaree

A major effort has been made to tidy up and rationalise our storage facility at Bungaree. Our good friend, Clinton Pearce, has travelled from New Zealand to assist with the project. His varied skills have been put to very good use. In November he removed all the heavy and important parts to be saved as spares from tram No 953 before the body went to a new home at the Yarram Hotel. Heavy parts were sorted and our collection of bogies was stacked. An enormous pile of scrap was created. The Museum has realised several thousand dollars from redundant metal.

In January, Lindsay Richardson, from the Perth Tramway Museum, joined Clinton to sort out and load for transport the second hand rails and point castings from Melbourne which had been stored for them. When this task was complete, Clinton installed new shelving in our containers to enable the collection of spare parts to be properly housed. A trench has been dug to connect power and water to the sheds.

#### Fire protection

Wormalds have finally set the 7<sup>th</sup> March as the date they intend to commence the installation of

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our new fire detection system. The system is designed to alert the fire brigade immediately anything untoward occurs. It was heartening to learn that at least we can sleep a little easier now that an individual is in custody having admitted to setting fire to a number of railway related structures.

### **The Depot “Fan”**

It is planned to undertake major work on the track in front of the depot building after the April school holidays. This will then allow the long overdue sealing and landscaping to be undertaken. Some of this track has not been touched for over forty years!

### **Signage**

The Business Development Committee was tasked with arranging a complete review and replacement of all the Museum’s signage. It engaged Peter Lambert who has designed much of the signage in Ballarat and the Board has been presented with his suggested designs. A final decision will be made at the next meeting. Warning signs must be approved by the traffic department of Council and following an approach to them new portable signs were supplied and permanent signs installed at no expense to the Museum.

### **Horse Tram Display**

As part of the project to improve the display in the “old shed” new display panels have been designed to tell the story of No 1. They are consistent with the panels in the display area and will be finished very soon. The project also includes revamping the area around the tram.

### **In the Workshop**

The Tuesday workforce has been kept busy with the day to day maintenance of the fleet. In the process of the replacement of brake shoes the brake rigging under No 40 was found to need considerable work. A small hole was found in one of No 28’s air tanks and the tank is being replaced. The Westinghouse controllers on our four wheel trams are a high maintenance item and much time has been spent in ensuring the ‘fingers’ and ‘segments’ are properly aligned to prevent arcing.

With a larger available workforce and the arrival of volunteers who will be able to carry

out some of the more complicated tasks, the motors for No 18 have been returned from UGL and their restoration will now be undertaken ‘in house’. Dave Macartney was not happy with his first attempt with the green paint he applied to No 18 and has rubbed it back again before repainting in another supplier’s product. The end result should be superb.

### **Tram No 12**

Our carpenter/joiner, Adam Stephenson, is back at work and it is expected that much of the joinery for the tram will be complete soon. The next task will be to undercoat all the new timberwork to ensure its protection.

## **Vale**

On Christmas eve Tom Murray, a widely known and very active rail enthusiast, passed away after complications following surgery. He was seventy-seven. Tom joined the BTPS in October 1973 somehow timing his application to obtain the membership number of 412\*. Tom began organising train tours when he was still at school and continued to do so until last year. They varied from short day trips to full weekend tours using special trains. His trips to New Zealand were legendary. In his younger days Tom was particularly active in the development of his beloved Puffing Billy Railway. Larger than life, Tom will be missed by all those who knew him.

(\* For those unfamiliar with the significance of the number 412, we suggest you speak to Dave Macartney. Just ring the depot late any afternoon)

## **South Gippsland Railway**

At a Special General Meeting on Saturday 16th January 2016, the majority of financial members voted to close down the South Gippsland Tourist Railway after twenty one years of operation. Train operations were suspended at the end November due to unresolved issues relating to the Safety Management System however these were only part of many other greater problems. These included the unsustainable low number of active members and insufficient financial resources to maintain aging infrastructure, buildings and rolling stock.

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### **The Yarloop Workshops**

On 7 January 2016 the workshops, along with most of the town, were destroyed by a bushfire. The Heritage Council of Western Australia has described the Yarloop Workshops as "the most intact example of an early privately-owned 20th century railway workshop in Australia". The place, including the workshop buildings, tracks and yards constructed circa 1900 - 1910, was considered to "comprise the most important group of early to mid-20th century timber industrial buildings in Western Australia". They have been described as "one of the finest examples of steam age engineering in the world." A tragic loss.

From: <http://www.watoday.com.au/>

### **Isle of Man Horse Tramway**

On 22 January 2016, owner and operator of the Douglas Bay Horse Tramway, Douglas Borough Council announced that it would no longer continue operating the horse tramway due to financial constraints. The fates of the remaining 24 original tramcars and the 22 horses are yet to be determined. It is intended that the Victorian stables and tramcar depot are to be sold off for re-development.

Following the announcement, a working party comprising officers from the Manx Government, the Council, Manx National Heritage and Culture Vannin was established. It will gather information and suggest a way forward with a view to operating a horse tram service during the 2016 summer season and to consider the long term future of the horse trams. The operation of the tramway has been seasonal for many years. An announcement is expected by March.

Until its closure the Douglas Bay Horse Tramway was the oldest remaining horse-drawn tram service in the world. Running on double track in the middle of the roadway along the seaside promenade it is a significant reminder of 19<sup>th</sup> century urban transport.

The "Friends of Douglas Bay Horse Tramway" are petitioning for the retention of the tramway and are seeking support. An on line petition can be found through their web page at: <http://www.friendsofdbh.org/>

### **Maintaining Rail Based Heritage**

News items in this edition indicate the continuing struggle to maintain the world's built heritage and specifically that which is rail based. In the last few months the historic Yarloop Workshops in Western Australia were destroyed by fire, the wonderful horse drawn tramway along the promenade in Douglas on the Isle of Man has been closed and nearer home the members of the South Gippsland Railway have given up in the face of insurmountable issues.

There are many issues involved. They range from the fragile nature of the asset to the enormous cost in financial and human resources in restoring, maintaining and operating rail based historic assets. No level of fire protection would have saved the Yarloop Workshops, but the two fires at Newport and the one at the Sydney Tramway Museum may have seen a different result with more appropriate fire protection. But that costs money to install and maintain.

The horse drawn tramway was costing the Douglas council in excess of a quarter of a million pounds a year to operate. Unfortunately, horses are an extremely expensive way to move public transport as the Ballarat Tramway Company discovered. They continue to use fuel even when the trams are in bed. Those on the Isle of Man were also seasonal. It is hoped that the island's government, the town council and the people will find some way to resume operations. The horse tramway, the Manx Electric Tramway and the steam hauled tourist railway are all serious reasons for visiting and tourism is a major industry on the island.

Closer to home, the closure of railway and tram lines has seen various groups formed in an attempt to retain some or all of them as operating reminders of our rail based heritage. Governments have been very accommodating in enabling the groups to set up and operate along existing lines. A common thread is an enthusiastic small band of volunteers commence operating using locomotives and vehicles which are OK to run and on track

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which is still serviceable.

Unfortunately, as time goes on it becomes harder and harder to keep a flow of new volunteers and the cost of maintaining the asset becomes beyond the resources of the group. If the railway is not highly visible through location or promotion, the income stream is never anywhere near enough to maintain the track and vehicles in serviceable condition. A high profile in the local community also makes a world of difference.

Full sized rail based vehicles are not toys and therefore safe operating standards are essential. The need for compliance with the relevant Acts becomes part of the burden on the group. Not only does the Rail Safety Act apply, but the group must provide a safe work place for its volunteers. Suitable insurances are required and the governing entity will need to report annually to a government body. What started out as a hobby where you turned up every now and again to 'play trains' has now become a burden to at least some of those who are still there.

To ensure that what was commenced remains for posterity careful and consistent management is essential. An organisation needs a robust and realistic view of what is possible, with the limited human and financial resources available. One feature of several of the New Zealand rail museums is their very short lines. South Gippsland Railway started with thirty eight kilometres! It may be frustrating for fans when the train reverses after only a couple of kilometres but at least there may be a better chance to maintain the vehicles and buildings. And little kiddies, usually among our most frequent visitors, get bored very quickly.

In the context of the Ballarat Tramway Museum, we have been fortunate in many respects. Our location is such that little advertising is required. We have had a remarkably stable management team. Trams are much less expensive to operate and maintain. Somehow we have managed to maintain all our vehicles in good operating condition. In recent years we have begun to attract a growing number of local retired volunteers, all of whom have quite a few

productive years left (if we treat them well!)

The Museum has a management group which has proved able to meet the demands involved. The trams have continued to run safely every weekend and holiday for over forty years utilising an absolute minimum of human and financial resources. In recent years some of our committee have been very successful in networking within the community and this has begun to pay off. One example was the recognition by Council of the need to commence the replacement of some of the track which is over 100 years old. The track and roadway have always remained the property of Council. The replacement will be budgeted for over a number of years.

From the income generated by visitors, volunteer museums such as ours can rarely afford to restore their assets or create the appropriate environment in which to display them. Donations, grants and legacies are vital for this purpose. The Museum is currently fortunate in having a sizable legacy from the estate of the late Bill Kingsley which is enabling it to embark on several projects which include the reconstruction of the body of No 12, the enhancement of the area in front of the building and the installation of the fire warning system.

The Museum is fortunate in that it does not need to maintain many kilometres of track and the surrounding land. It does not maintain a multitude of structures and it does not run steam engines. In recent years local enthusiasm has grown, particularly among the recently retired, and better networking has led to a rise in our profile in Ballarat. As long as we can maintain financial and management discipline our future should be bright.

*Peter Winspur*

### **Membership News**

The Museum welcomes the following new members and Junior Supporter:

899 Joshua Pitt of Sebastopol  
900 Leighton Rego-Nickerson of Belgrave  
5080 Ruby Rose Mong of Mt Pleasant

We hope they find their time with us productive and rewarding.

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**The Douglas Horse Drawn Tramway**

*Photo: Peter Winspur 18/7/2014*



**Above:** Peter Waugh captioned these two photos for our Facebook page:

Noah: "Damn, this hay is tasty. What do you reckon the shovel is for?"

Brooke: "Dunno, can't be for anything we do, the track is always clean when we come back!"

"In the bucket please, not in that bloke's window". A nasty job but someone has to do it. Truly it may be nasty but the rest of the crew enjoyed seeing someone else do it. 24/1/2016



**Left:**

Ebony chose to take the bridal party by tram to the reception at 'Pipers'.

*31/12/2015*

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### Right:

Tram No 40 enjoying the early evening light.

*Photo: Roger Gosney*

Over fifty members of the Ballarat Historical Society visited on Tuesday evening 9<sup>th</sup> February 2016. Many stories were told and interesting artefacts produced. No 40 was the perfect vehicle to carry them to their next port of call, the former zoo and maze.



### Left:

Young tram enthusiast, Cameron, celebrated his sixth birthday at the Museum on 5<sup>th</sup> January 2016.

Mum had arranged a wonderful cake.

*Photo: Peter Waugh*



**Fares Please!** is published by the Ballarat Tramway Museum Inc. (A0031819K) six times a year in alternate months commencing in February. It is distributed to members and friends.

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